



## **National Response Plan and National Incident Management System Review and Revision Process Stakeholder Meeting Wednesday, October 25, 2006**

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### **National Incident Management System (NIMS) Key Revision Issues - Background**

#### **1) What guidance is required to clarify roles and responsibilities within the NIMS framework?**

- The NIMS must offer clear guidance to stakeholders so that roles and responsibilities are well defined within the NIMS framework. Existing NIMS guidance for multi-agency coordination systems and public information systems is lacking.
- Personnel must understand the unified command structure under the ICS.
- Coordination was undoubtedly a challenge in the Hurricane Katrina response—issues ranged from confusion about mission assignments and deployments to broader misunderstandings about command structure.
- Agencies should not function as independent “cells,” they should be represented by functional areas throughout the ICS. For example, agency representatives working on transportation issues should be sitting together, whether they are from DOT, DHS, or DOD.
- The effectiveness of the Unified Command structure must be enhanced in order to better implement the National Response Plan. State and Federal entities must establish an effective Unified Command during the initial response.
- An incomplete understanding of NIMS roles and responsibilities leads to misunderstandings, problems, and delays.
- In order to effectively implement NIMS, senior officials at departments and agencies must be familiar with the requirements of their ESF roles, be able to increase participation for specific scenarios, know how to request and assign assets and be able to define the level of representation and participation coordinating entities require.

**2) How can the concept of preparedness be better incorporated into NIMS (e.g. including more information on topics such as mutual aid, role of chief elected and appointed officials, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations)?**

- The NIMS document should place a greater emphasis on preparedness, and include more information on topics such as mutual aid, role of chief elected and appointed officials, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.
- Detailed briefings as well as other educational materials, including exercises on the NIMS should be developed for all relevant Federal decision-makers including each Cabinet Secretary and his or her emergency response staff. Additionally, DHS should develop and deliver similar materials tailored to relevant state and local decision makers, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

**3) How should NIMS be refined to ensure that the document can be easily understood by all stakeholders?**

- Refinements to the NIMS should ensure that the document can be easily understood by all stakeholders, as a lack of NIMS understanding was noted as a significant hindrance to its implementation.
- Developing an understanding of the ICS at all levels will eliminate confusion, standardize operations throughout the government, and limit unnecessary interference with field command.

**4) How can NIMS be better tied to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 “National Preparedness,” National Response Plan, and other Federal response efforts?**

- Demonstrate how NIMS is integrated with other Homeland Security efforts including: HSPD-8, National Response Plan, and Federal response efforts.
- DHS should build commitment to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) by Federal, State and local officials and other responders.
- All Federal departments and agencies should align their response structures to NIMS. In accordance with this alignment, the entire Federal response structure should be NIMS based, reporting through one unified command using the same terminology and basic organizational structure.

**5) Emphasize the importance of NIMS training for all emergency management, response personnel and disaster workers at all levels of government, the private sector and nongovernmental agencies.**

- NIMS training is necessary for emergency management, response personnel and disaster workers at all levels of government, the private sector and nongovernmental agencies.
- Officials must understand the provisions of NIMS in order to implement them during an incident.
- A formal NIMS training and exercise program should be instituted for all department and agency personnel (at all levels) with incident management responsibilities. The key to the implementation of ICS is training. All departments and agencies should undertake an aggressive ICS training program for all personnel who may deploy during a disaster. It is essential that personnel have a working knowledge of ICS before a disaster occurs.